



Disaster and Emergency Management Resources

Storm-damaged Trees

- Homeowners assessing tree damage caused by recent storms will want to decide if the tree can be salvaged or if it should be cut down and replaced.
- Small trees with minor damage probably can be taken care of by the homeowner, but large, mature trees likely will need the help of a professional tree service.
- The first priority should be safety. Assess whether the tree itself or some of its branches are in danger of falling now or in the near future.
- Just because a trunk is split does not necessarily mean the tree will die soon. Large, split branches or trunks that have not broken off the tree can be braced and possibly saved by an arborist. If limbs have fallen completely off the tree, nothing can be done to save the branch. In either case, the wounded area in the tree will always be a weak spot that is susceptible to disease, rotting, and insects.
- For trees that have just a few damaged limbs, it is relatively easy to remove small, lower branches with loppers or a pruning saw. Use sharp pruning tools appropriate to the size of the job to ensure a clean, smooth cut. Use hand shears on branches up to 1/4 inch in diameter, loppers on branches up to 1 1/2 inches in diameter, and a pruning saw on branches more than 1-inch thick.
- For larger limbs or those too far up to reach, hire an arborist or other professional service. They'll have the appropriate tools and equipment to bring down large or high limbs safely so that the tree, house, or other nearby objects will not be damaged.
- In general, pruning sealants or paint are no longer recommended for treating pruning wounds. There is some controversy regarding these products, but generally they have not been shown to be helpful.

Adapted from resource material developed by the Indiana Extension Service entitled "Storms and Trees"